



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Most of Kittitas County to be quarantined for apple maggot

OLYMPIA – Acting out of concern for the viability of Washington’s apple industry, Washington State Department of Agriculture director Valoria Loveland announced today that most of Kittitas County will be added to the state’s apple maggot quarantine area effective Aug. 16.

The decision came after public hearings on the proposed quarantine on Jan. 27 and March 30 in Ellensburg.

“This is an unfortunate situation that must be addressed for the sake of the entire Washington apple industry,” Loveland said. “I have directed my staff to work with Kittitas County growers to implement these requirements in the least burdensome way. We also will continue to work with the industry to determine whether the current regulatory system is the best way to ensure a healthy crop and strong, profitable foreign markets.”

State agriculture officials stress the quarantine does not prohibit the commercial sale of fruit from the county. Under quarantine rules, apples from Kittitas County will continue to be shipped when accompanied by an easily-obtainable certificate issued by the state Department of Agriculture.

The certificate states either that no apple maggot flies were caught within one half-mile of the orchard shipping the fruit, or that flies were caught within one half-mile of the orchard, but inspections revealed no apple maggot larvae in the fruit.

Last year no apple maggot fly was caught within three miles of any commercial orchard in Kittitas County. However, apple maggots live not only in commercial fruits, such as apples and cherries, but also in fruits of native hawthorn. There is a large population of hawthorn that could serve as a pathway to the commercial orchards.

A six square-mile area in the southeast corner of the county, isolated geographically and biologically from potential infestation by natural barriers, is exempted from the quarantine.

The Kittitas County quarantine -- in addition to requiring commercial fruit to be shipped with a certificate -- prohibits the movement of homegrown fruit out of the county into non-infested areas of the state. The state has 20 counties currently under an apple maggot quarantine --17 in western Washington or the Columbia Gorge, and two in eastern Washington (Klickitat and Spokane counties)

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WSDA proposed an apple maggot quarantine in Kittitas County after 26 apple maggot flies were trapped in the Ellensburg area last summer and live apple maggot pupae were detected at two sites.

Apple maggot, a major fruit pest native to the East Coast of North America, is a small fly that attacks apple, crabapple, cherry and native hawthorn, and destroys crops by burrowing throughout the fruit.

Persons with questions on the quarantine or who wish a copy of the new quarantine rule may contact Mike Klaus, WSDA entomologist, at (509) 225-2609 or by email at mklaus@agr.wa.gov, or Jim Marra, managing entomologist, at (360) 664-0905 or by email at jmarra@agr.wa.gov.

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